

Agriculture --- Florida's Opportunity

Conducted by W. E. Pabor

THE "GARDEN HUCKLEBERRY"—AN EXPERIMENT AND A FAILURE.

Last winter, as the Northern seedsmen's catalogues began to drift in, I noticed "a new household fruit of great value"—a garden huckleberry. Now, we have the wild berry in profusion throughout Florida and, of course, a cultivated variety might be an improvement; so I was interested; the more so after reading the somewhat extravagant notice of it in the catalogue, reading as it did, as follows:

"A new fruit from Washington State, and most desirable introduction of late years; will out-yield any other berry grown. Grows from seed and ripens its crop same year. Berries jet black, four times the size of huckleberries; for pies or jams it is the equal of any other fruit grown. Plant same as tomato, in box or pan, and, when danger of frost is over, set out 4x6 feet. When jet black, stew thirty minutes; make very sweet. Better than wild huckleberries for pies, jams, jellies, sauce and canning. This new fruit is insect proof. A light frost improves the fruit. This fruit can be kept fresh for winter use or market. For winter use pull up two vines just before frost, or after the first frost, stack away where they will not freeze, and delicious fresh fruit can be picked all winter, as they will not rot and will keep fresh and nice for months."

So I sent for a 10-cent packet of seeds, and, about the first of March, planted them in the beds prepared for raising plants to be set out later in the open ground. About 40 per cent of the seeds came up in due time and thrived well; one picking out was given them, and, about the middle of May, at the commencement of the rainy season, I transplanted, the same as one does with tomatoes, into the garden, on the northern slope of ground, since, as they came from the far North, it was deemed more preferable climatic conditions prevailed. Set singly, about three feet apart in the row, they took early root, and, when I left for a six weeks' vacation in the West, had fairly established themselves, having been given a generous handful of commercial fertilizer such as was used in the pinery shed, about each plant.

When I returned in July the bushes were about a foot high, fairly well balanced and full of fruit as large as marbles or scuppernong grapes borne

single and in clusters. I congratulated myself on having something new, novel and of value; but, asking the boys who had cared for the place during my absence, about them they said: "Nix goot; hard as marbles, perfectly tasteless."

Then I tested them and found it true. I went into the house, got out the gorgeously illustrated catalogue that described the "new household fruit of great value," and re-read the florid descriptive text about it. Whatever the fruit was in the State of Washington, in the State of Florida it was a very different thing.

In my yearly journeyings to the meetings of the National Editorial Association during the last twenty years I have met many editors from every State and Territory of the Union; so I recalled one, the editor of the Northwest Horticulturist, of Tacoma, Wash., and wrote him as to my experience with the wonderful fruit that had ventured into the Southland as a possible domicile for itself. Here is his reply:

"Tacoma, Wash., Aug. 15, 1905.—W. E. Pabor, Avon Park, Fla.: Dear Sir—Replying to your favor of some days ago, we have two huckleberries growing wild here in Washington, the purple and the dark blue or black. The latter only is used for culinary purposes, and it is a delicious pie fruit. Under your conditions it might do differently. Should you desire to try, we may be able to procure some seed or plants to ship you in the fall. Very truly,

"C. A. TONNESON."

And it was the purple I had growing in my garden. And the woman seed seller had sent out the useless, instead of the useful, kind. Did she know it? Had she grown and tested it in her fairy-like surroundings at Floral Park? Will she tell us?

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary,"

How did your huckleberries grow?

Now, in a little magazine published in Pennsylvania, I find, in the September issue an article on this same fruit—the first I have seen in any of my reading of fruit papers. Its editor, stating that a discussion had arisen among those interested as to whether it was a safe addition to our list of edible fruits, and, as the botanist of the bureau of plant industry at Washington had been quoted as authority regarding the poisonous properties of the fruit, the

editor wrote to the botanist, sending specimens, and the answer—condensed—was as follows:

"The berries are one of the forms of the *Solanum nigrum*; Gray's Flora cites it as included among more than fifty species of widely diffused weedy plants, with differences in the poisonous properties; sometimes called edible nightshade; grows wild in South Dakota, where it is used for pies and preserves; also in Arkansas and Missouri; have eaten a few without any ill effects; the insipid flavor does not recommend it to the normal taste; the plant doubtless contains salanine, which poisonous properties is also found in dangerous quantities in exposed potatoes on surface of ground during growth. The name huckleberry, as applied to this plant, is exceedingly unfortunate, since the plant is not at all related to the huckleberry, and its fruit does not give even a suggestion of the agreeable flavor of the huckleberry or blueberry. Very truly yours,

"LYSTER H. DEWEY, Botanist."

"Washington, D. C., July 27, 1905."

All of which goes to show that we of Florida had better pin our faith to the native huckleberry of our piney woods and keep the *Solanum nigrum* out of our gardens.

When the new catalogues for the coming year reach me I shall look to see if it is still exploited as "a new and valuable fruit." Perhaps the seed is—to the seller.

Consul General Skinner of Marceillo, France, reports to the State Department that scarcely a week goes by but inquiry is made regarding the new potato being exploited in France. But L. C. Corbett, horticulturist of the bureau of plant industry, does not seem to have a very high opinion of it, as he says in reply to an inquiry from the editor of the Daily Consular Reports:

"Your very interesting communication in regard to the so-called new species of potato, which we have determined to be *Solanum commersoni*, has been received. This plant has been known to botanists for many years, but, so far as I know, has only recently been made the subject of investigation by experimenters. While this plant seems to possess many valuable qualities, it is tropical by nature which, as well as its weedy character when it escapes from cul-

(Continued on Fourteenth Page)

Femininity and the Home Circle

Conducted by Helen Harcourt

OUR COSY CORNER.

Most cordial greeting and a hearty welcome to all the new sisters and brothers of Our Home Circle—redivivus. Redivivus—for it is not to-day that it is born. It "lived and moved, and had its being" some years ago, and for seven years it went about all over the Union seeking for the good that it might find to do, and doing it as well as it knew how.

But there came a time when its vehicle got upset, or the wheels came off—or something—and Our Home Circle retired into the shadows to sleep awhile—not to die. It had faith in its ultimate resurrection, and to-day that faith is justified. Our Home Circle was just biding its time and waiting for the day when it should once more roll up its sleeves and go to work for the greatest good of the greatest number.

And the day has come. The SUN-shine has reached it and waked it from its slumber, and now it steps forth into the arena, wide-awake, and eager to renew its friendship with the old-time sisters and brothers, and to shake hands with the new.

There are hundreds in Florida to-day who know something of the work of Our Home Circle in the auld lang syne, and what it did then it hopes to do again. It purposes to take up its duties just where it laid them down, and to enlarge their sphere. And what was its work, do you ask, you new sisters and brothers of Our Home Circle? In truth, it would be easier to tell what was not its work. But its editor will try to answer the query.

It sought first and always to extend a helping hand to those who needed assistance or advice, to cheer and encourage the weary housekeeper and the perplexed new settler. It sought to bring together in Our Cosy Corner the individual members of its big family, for their mutual benefit. It found homes for homeless little ones, and at the same time filled empty niches in lonely hearts, and brought child-music into sad and silent households. It brought together men and women who needed to flee from the cold winters of the North, yet had not the means to come South and pay their board, and those already here, who needed help in their households, yet were

not able to pay cash for it. In this line of its work Our Home Circle saved some valuable lives, and at the same time placed help in homes that must otherwise have done without it. It enabled its own family to exchange commodities between themselves, and its exchange column did a thriving business. And that our new members may understand just how it was conducted here is the notice that stood at its head, and will be there again, just as soon as some one steps into Our Home Circle with an initial request for an exchange: "Our Family Exchange. Open to all subscribers for purposes of exchange, and for the sale of small home products, such as jellies, embroideries, plants, seashells, bees, books, etc. Advertisements, and their answers, to avoid delay, must be addressed to the Editor Our Home Circle, The Sun, Leesburg, Fla. Each answer must be accompanied by an unaddressed stamped envelope, in which to forward it to the advertiser." The answer forwarded to its destination, the responsibility of our exchange column ceases. The initials of advertisers will be given, also their county, so that those who reply can judge of the expense to be met on articles that must be exchanged by express or freight.

Our Home Circle was also instrumental in the organization of many of the Village Improvement Associations now scattered over this State. When its work in this direction began there was but one such association in Florida, the pioneer—Green Cove Spring Village Improvement Association. The enterprising band of women who composed the association had issued a little book containing their constitution and by-laws, and through their courtesy Our Home Circle was enabled to send copies of this book to all who applied for it. The result was the formation of numerous village improvement associations which designated Our Home Circle as their official organ. It received their reports of meetings and entertainments, and kept them in touch, the one with the other. This is one of the features it purposes to take up again. Let the V. I. A.'s of Florida take notice and send in their communications. They will be welcome.

All of these things, and many more, did the old Home Circle, and it never became weary of well-

doing. It intends to do them all again, and also many more besides as its work trends upward and onward, and reaches out into the SUN-shine, all over our beautiful State, and beyond.

But its editor wants the help and co-operation of its members; wants them all to feel, both sisters and brothers, that the "Cousin Helen" of to-day is the same "Cousin Helen" of the good old times, and will welcome them into Our Cosy Corner just as in the auld lang syne. She wants them to step in and "say their say" about things as they see and know them; to state their experiments and experiences in the home for the benefit of others, and to contribute of their stores of good things, and of all else that may help a weary brother or sister.

A TRICK ABOUT IRONING.

The Chinese laundryman knows a little trick worth trying. Instead of heating his iron just right for use he heats it scorching hot; then he plunges it into cold water for an instant, which cools the surface sufficiently to allow him to make several effective passes, the heat meantime gradually returning to the surface. If necessary he repeats this two or three times till the iron is of the right temperature to ply its vocation uninterruptedly. This saves the frequent changing of irons of the usual method.

OUR LETTER BOX.

You will find right here, but it's empty just now. One don't expect letters before the first mail comes in. But the lid is up.

OUR FAMILY FRIEND.

Under this heading our readers will find items of practical value to the whole household—how to do things and how to make them. And our sisters and brothers are expected to prove themselves true friends of the family, too, by telling us all about

(Continued on Fifteenth Page)